

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A system for disseminating information over a wide area network includes a central caching unit for storing data to be made available over the wide area network. Local access give users access to the wide area network. Distributed caching units associated with the local access nodes for store cacheable material. A satellite communications system establishes satellite communications between the central caching unit and the local caching units for the transfer of cacheable material from the central caching unit to the local units. A router at the local access nodes routes packets from users to a destination address. The router includes local routing tables containing the addresses of material cached at the associated local node and responds to routing requests for locally cached material by directing the requests to the local cache.